

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, U.S. ARMY FIELD ARTILLERY CENTER AND FORT SILL
FORT SILL, OKLAHOMA 73503-5000

USAFACFS Regulation
No. 210-12

15 September 2003

Installations
FORT SILL OUT-OF-SCHOOL HOME-ALONE POLICY

1. PURPOSE. To establish policy and guidelines for leaving children unattended at home IAW Army Regulation 608-18, Family Advocacy program.

2. SCOPE. This policy and guidelines pertain to all Army personnel assigned to and/or residing on Fort Sill. Violation of this policy may subject personnel to criminal prosecution, civil liability, administrative action or termination of housing privileges on the installation.

3. POLICY/PROCEDURES.

a. Sponsors are responsible for the health, welfare, and safety of minor family members at all times. Sponsors are responsible for ensuring family members comply with the provisions of this policy. A continuum of age appropriate supervision options is available both on and off post. Child and Youth Services is able to assist parents seeking regular supervision for their children.

b. In all cases, interpretation of this regulation should be made in favor of the child's safety.

c. Where grade in school is identified in this regulation as a delineator, children will be deemed to be in that grade until the successful completion of the school year. During the summer months, after the successful completion of a school year, children will be deemed to be in the supervision category of the grade they will assume in the fall.

d. The age that a child may be left unattended is determined by the environmental conditions, age, and abilities of the child. Individuals should refer to the enclosed Age Matrix for minimum standards for use in making decisions involving safety and proper supervision of children. The enclosed guidelines are applicable only if the child has no physical or mental disabilities, if the conditions are not chronic, and the environment is safe.

*This publication supersedes USAFACFS Regulation 210-12, 23 March 2001.

e. A “supervisor” is any person 13 years of age or older who is in a supervisory role and can provide adequately for a child’s welfare and safety in all circumstances deemed appropriate.

f. Outdoor Play.

(1) Preschool age children require close supervision, keep them under direct visual or auditory contact. They may play in an appropriately designated safe areas but must have immediate access to adult supervision. The person supervising must be able to respond to any emergency or threatening situation. Do not leave children in this age group alone at any time. *NOTE: Immediate access is defined as within eyesight or hearing distance and ability to respond within 30 seconds.*

(2) You can allow elementary School age children (1st through 6th grade) to explore their environment but afford them protection and they must have access to adult supervision. *NOTE: Access is defined as having ability contact a verifiable, prearranged, responsible adult in case of emergency and the sponsor knowing the location of the child.*

f. Children left alone in quarters.

(1) Never leave preschool age children (birth through Kindergarten) alone. Keep them under close supervision with direct visual contact. Make periodic checks on sleeping children.

(2) Do not leave elementary school age children (1st through 4th grade) unattended in quarters.

(3) You may occasionally leave elementary school age children (5th and 6th grade) unattended, in quarters for a maximum of 3 hours during the day, if the child has constant access to a responsible adult, is not caring for younger children, and demonstrates the ability to be responsible and mature. However, do not place children in this age group in self-care on a regular basis.

(4) You may leave JUNIOR HIGH/MIDDLE SCHOOL age children unattended in quarters for up to 6 hours and he/she may care for younger children if they have access to a responsible adult. If there are too many children, if the responsibility is too great, or if they are not responsible, reliable, or mature, do not leave them unattended.

(5) You may leave HIGHSCHOOL age children (10th through 12th grade) unattended and he/she may care for younger children if the sponsor is in the local area and unless the length of time is too long, there are too many children, or the teenager is not responsible, reliable, or mature. *NOTE: Local area is defined as an area or location that is no more than 1 hour away by car.*

(6) Children left unattended in quarters must know where their parent is and how to get in touch with them. They must know when and how to call the police, ambulance, and other emergency numbers. They must have another responsible adult besides their parent that they can call or have access to. Ensure they are aware of the Fort Sill guidelines and their responsibilities if they are watching younger children.

g. Special provisions.

(1) Children who meet the criteria for the Exceptional Family Member Program , as defined by AR 608-75, require special supervision. Parents may modify these guidelines in accordance with their children's special needs.

(2) Children who are in the care of a certified Family Child Care (FCC) provider, who has entered into a contract with the children's parents for such care, will be supervised by the FCC provider in accordance with guidelines set forth in AR 608-10, AR 608-18 and local procedures.

(3) A motor vehicle is always considered an unsafe environment. Some situations may make it impractical or unsafe to not leave children in a vehicle such as when changing a flat tire along the highway or when putting fuel in a vehicle at a station. In these situations do not leave the vehicle running and do not allow children access to the ignition key. Parent must be able to observe the children at all times and be able to react if the child tries to get out of the vehicle or has some other health or safety need. Parent will not be out of the car for longer than necessary.

(4) Playgrounds, parks, basketball courts, and similar locations. These places are not safe environments for preschool or elementary school age children. Preschool age children must have immediate adult supervision. Elementary School age children should have constant access to a parent, guardian or other person responsible for their well-being. Do not leave children in these areas for more than an hour during the day, and you or a responsible adult should check on them frequently during that hour.

(5) A swimming area is always considered an unsafe environment. Swimming areas present extreme hazards to children. You should never leave preschool, kindergarten, and elementary school age children unattended in a swimming area.

(6) Elementary school age children may walk to and from school by themselves or in groups, by a pre-arranged route and with their parent's permission.

h. Any person having knowledge of children left unattended on Fort Sill **outside of these guidelines** must immediately notify the military police.

4. LAW ENFORCEMENT. Following are examples of actions taken by law enforcement personnel when a child is found unattended.

- a. Police consider an **infant** found unattended to be in imminent danger and will take infant into protective custody.
- b. When a child is found unattended by police outside of above policy, the police will contact a parent and request immediate care for the child. If police cannot locate a parent or parent is unable or unwilling to provide immediate care for the child, the police will take the child into protective custody.

APPENDIX A

Age Matrix

1. Parents are responsible for the welfare and safety of children in the military community.
2. Each child is unique. Personality, environment, developmental progress, and maturity level are factors used to determine when children are ready to accomplish activities with little or no supervision. The following are minimum community standards, and under no circumstances you reduce these guidelines. Parents are still required to assess their child and, if necessary, raise the age limits.

Age of Child	Left Home Alone	Left Alone Overnight	Play Outside Unattended	Left in Car Unattended	Child Sit for Siblings	Child Sit for Other Children
Newborn through Age 3	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Pre-Schooler through Kindergarten	NO	NO	YES: in designated safe area with immediate access (visual sight or hearing distance) to adult supervision	NO	NO	NO
1 st through 4 th graders	NO	NO	YES: with access to emergency supervision and sponsor knows location of child	NO	NO	NO
5 th through 6 th grade	YES: With ready access to adult supervision; Limit – 3 hrs	NO	YES: with access to adult supervision	YES: with keys removed and handbrake applied	NO	NO

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Age of Child	Left Home Alone	Left Alone Overnight	Play Outside Unattended	Left in Car Unattended	Child Sit for Siblings	Child Sit for Other Children
Junior High 7 th through 9 th grade	YES: with access to adult supervision ; Limit – 6 hrs	NO	YES: with access to adult supervision	YES	YES	YES: may not sit overnight
High School 10 th through 12 th grade	YES	YES: with sponsor in local area and access to adult supervision	YES: with access to adult supervision	YES	YES	YES

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